

5th & Hill Neighborhood Rights Campaign

44 E. Main Street, Suite 208
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 352-6533

March 29, 2008

Stan Black
Office of Community Relations
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 19276
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276

Cc: Senator Michael Frerichs
Representative Naomi Jakobsson
Champaign City Council

Dear Mr. Black,

On behalf of the children of the 5th & Hill neighborhood in Champaign, we are calling on you and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that appropriate warning signs are put on the Ameren property at 5th and Hill in Champaign.

The signs that have been up on the property for a long time say the following:

WARNING
Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site
BEFORE DIGGING
CALL
1-800-232-3108
ILLINOIS POWER COMPANY

These signs are completely inappropriate, not only because they are grossly outdated and faded, but because they give no indication that the property is contaminated with chemicals known to be toxic and they merely direct people to call an IL Power Company phone number "before digging."

It is our understanding that the mission of the IL EPA is "to safeguard environmental quality, consistent with the social and economic needs of the State, so as to protect health, welfare, property and the quality of life."

It is also our understanding that Claudia Lennhoff, of the Champaign County Health Care Consumers, contacted you on behalf of the 5th & Hill Neighborhood Rights Campaign on February 9, 2008, to request your help in ensuring that appropriate signs be put up that warn residents that the site is contaminated.

Ms. Lennhoff reported that you indicated to her that you would look into what kind of sign would be appropriate for the site, given the circumstances.

We are extremely dissatisfied with the IL EPA's response to our requests and concerns. Presumably in response to our request for appropriate signs, new signs were placed on the property that are orange and black and simply state "NO TRESPASSING." This type of sign can be bought in any hardware store, and such a general sign is frankly insulting, and an irresponsible way of addressing our very real concerns.

Therefore, we are writing to demand that IL EPA ensure that proper signs be placed on the property. In order to properly safeguard the health and safety of our neighborhood children, the signs should include the following messages:

- Warning of the contamination or some indication of hazard due to contamination;
- No trespassing;
- Instructions to avoid contact with soil and water;
- Instructions to wash hands as a precaution after contact with soil and water; and
- An appropriate IL EPA phone number to contact.

We believe that 14 days is adequate amount of time to place such signs on the Ameren property. Therefore, we expect the property to have appropriate signage by Tuesday, April 15, 2008.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the 5th & Hill Neighborhood Rights Campaign: